

HOT AND HOT TOMATO SALAD

WE ALWAYS LOOK FOR A VARIETY OF LOCALLY GROWN, HEIRLOOM TOMATOES AT OUR FARMERS' MARKET. IF HEIRLOOMS ARE NOT AVAILABLE, WE OPT FOR RIPE RED TOMATOES THAT ARE GROWN LOCALLY. THE WHOLE BABY OKRA MAKE FOR A BEAUTIFUL PRESENTATION BUT IF THEY ARE UNAVAILABLE SUBSTITUTE THE LARGER-SIZE OKRA AND CUT THEM INTO ONE-HALF-INCH PIECES BEFORE BREADING AND FRYING.

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

SALAD:

6 LARGE BEEFSTEAK TOMATOES
2 LARGE GOLDEN DELIGHT TOMATOES
2 LARGE RAINBOW TOMATOES
½ PINT SWEET 100 TOMATOES (TINY CHERRY TOMATOES CAN BE SUBSTITUTED)
¾ CUP PLUS 3 TABLESPOONS BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE (PAGE 346), DIVIDED
1½ TEASPOONS KOSHER SALT
¾ TEASPOON FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
1 SMOKED HAM HOCK
1 LARGE ONION, PEELED AND QUARTERED
1 FRESH THYME SPRIG
6 OUNCES (1 CUP) FRESH FIELD PEAS, SUCH AS BLACK-EYED, PINK-EYED, OR BUTTER BEANS
2 TABLESPOONS PEANUT OIL
3 EARS OF YELLOW CORN, HUSKED
6 SLICES APPLEWOOD SMOKED BACON, COOKED UNTIL CRISP
¾ CUP CHIVE DRESSING (PAGE 347)
6 TABLESPOONS CHIFFONADE OF FRESH BASIL

OKRA:

4 CUPS VEGETABLE OIL
30 PIECES WHOLE BABY OKRA
¼ CUP BUTTERMILK
¼ CUP CORN FLOUR
¼ CUP CORNMEAL
¼ CUP ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR
1 TEASPOON KOSHER SALT, DIVIDED
½ TEASPOON FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER, DIVIDED

FOR SERVING:

¾ CUP CHIVE DRESSING (PAGE 347)
6 TABLESPOONS CHIFFONADE OF FRESH BASIL

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TO PREPARE THE SALAD:

Core and slice the beefsteak, golden delight, and rainbow tomatoes into ¼-inch-thick slices. Toss the sliced tomatoes and the Sweet 100 tomatoes with ¾ cup of the vinaigrette. Season the tomatoes with the salt and pepper and set aside at room temperature to marinate until ready to serve.

Combine the ham hock, onion, thyme sprig, and field peas in a medium stockpot with enough cold water to cover the beans. Bring the peas to a simmer and cook until just tender, 12 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat, drain, and cool. Remove and discard the ham hock, onion quarters, and thyme sprig. Place the cooled peas in a mixing bowl and set aside.

Shave the kernels off the corn cobs, discarding the silk hairs. Heat the peanut oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the corn kernels and cook until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Season the corn with salt and pepper to taste, and remove from the heat and cool slightly. Toss the corn kernels with the cooked field peas and the remaining 3 tablespoons of vinaigrette. Set the pea mixture aside to marinate at room temperature until ready to serve.

TO PREPARE THE OKRA:

Pour the vegetable oil into a deep-sided skillet to a depth of 3 inches. (Alternately, a deep fryer can be filled with vegetable oil.) Preheat the oil to 350°F.

Trim the okra stems and place okra pods in a small bowl with the buttermilk. Toss until well coated.

Combine the corn flour, cornmeal, all-purpose flour, salt, and pepper in medium bowl. Drain the okra from the buttermilk and toss in the cornmeal mixture. Shake off any excess cornmeal mixture. Place the okra in the preheated vegetable oil and fry for 2 to 3 minutes, or until golden. Remove okra from the hot oil with a slotted spoon and drain on a paper towel-lined plate. Season the okra with the remaining salt and pepper, if needed. Keep warm until ready to serve.

TO SERVE:

Arrange each of the different types of sliced tomatoes on six plates. Place the whole Sweet 100 tomatoes around the sliced tomatoes. Divide the pea and corn mixture evenly among plates on top of the tomatoes. Arrange 5 pieces of fried okra around each plate and place 1 slice of crispy bacon on the top of each salad. Drizzle 1 to 2 tablespoons of the chive dressing over the top of each salad and garnish each with 1 tablespoon of basil chiffonade. Serve immediately.

LEMON DIJON VINAIGRETTE

THIS IS ONE OF OUR MOST WIDELY USED VINAIGRETTES. IT IS VERY VERSATILE AND THE VARIATIONS ARE ENDLESS. IF YOU ARE SAVING THE VINAIGRETTE FOR A LATER USE, FOR BEST RESULTS, BE SURE TO STRAIN AND DISCARD THE CHOPPED SHALLOTS AND HERBS. FRESH SHALLOTS AND HERBS CAN BE ADDED AGAIN, JUST BEFORE SERVING.

YIELD: ABOUT 2 CUPS

- ½ CUP PLUS 2 TABLESPOONS FRESH LEMON JUICE
- ¼ CUP DIJON MUSTARD
- ½ CUP OLIVE OIL
- ½ CUP EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- 2 TABLESPOONS MINCED SHALLOTS
- 2 TABLESPOONS FINELY CHOPPED FRESH PARSLEY
- ½ TEASPOON FINELY CHOPPED FRESH THYME
- ½ TEASPOON KOSHER SALT
- ½ TEASPOON FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER

Whisk together the lemon juice, mustard, and olive oils. Stir in the shallots, parsley, and thyme. Season the vinaigrette with the salt and pepper. Use immediately or refrigerate for up to two days.

VARIATIONS:

TO MAKE **CHERVIL VINAIGRETTE**, WHISK IN ½ CUP OF FINELY CHOPPED FRESH CHERVIL TO THE PREPARED VINAIGRETTE AND PROCEED AS DIRECTED.

TO MAKE **MEYER LEMON VINAIGRETTE**, SUBSTITUTE ½ CUP PLUS 2 TABLESPOONS OF FRESHLY SQUEEZED MEYER LEMON JUICE FOR THE REGULAR LEMON JUICE AND ADD ½ TEASPOON OF GRATED MEYER LEMON ZEST AND PROCEED AS DIRECTED.

TO MAKE **PARMESAN VINAIGRETTE**, WHISK IN 2 CUPS OF FRESHLY GRATED, LOOSELY PACKED PARMESAN CHEESE TO THE PREPARED VINAIGRETTE AND PROCEED AS DIRECTED.

BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

YIELD: 2 CUPS

- 1 CUP BALSAMIC VINEGAR
- 1 CUP FINELY CHOPPED FRESH CHIVES
- ½ CUP CHOPPED GREEN ONIONS
- ½ CUP EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
- ½ CUP OLIVE OIL
- ¼ TEASPOON KOSHER SALT
- ⅛ TEASPOON FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER

Whisk together the vinegar, chives, and green onions in a medium bowl. Slowly whisk the oils into the vinegar mixture until well blended and slightly emulsified. Season the vinegar mixture with the salt and pepper. The vinaigrette can be used immediately or stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to five days. Be sure to bring the chilled vinaigrette to room temperature and whisk well before serving.

CREAMY HERB DRESSING

YIELD: ABOUT 1 ¼ CUPS

- 1 CUP BASIC AÏOLI (PAGE 342) OR STORE-BOUGHT MAYONNAISE
- 1 TABLESPOON PLUS 1 TEASPOON BLOND VERJUS
- 1 TABLESPOON PLUS 1 TEASPOON TARRAGON VINEGAR
- 2½ TEASPOONS DIJON MUSTARD
- 1 TABLESPOON CHOPPED FRESH TARRAGON
- 1 TABLESPOON CHOPPED FRESH CHIVES
- 1 TABLESPOON CHOPPED FRESH PARSLEY
- 1 TABLESPOON CHOPPED FRESH CHERVIL
- ¼ TEASPOON KOSHER SALT
- ⅛ TEASPOON FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER

Whisk together the aïoli, verjus, tarragon vinegar, and Dijon mustard until smooth. Stir in the herbs and season with the salt and pepper. The dressing can be used immediately or refrigerated in an airtight container for up to three days.